TAKE THE LEAD

ACM Mark Binskin assumes command of the ADF

CDF ACM Mark Binskin at the change of command ceremony in Canberra. Photo: Lauren Larking

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Time to reflect on proud service

CPL Aaron Curran

PAST and present members of the ADF came together at the Australian War Memorial (AWM) on July 9 to honour the grandfather, who served and fought in defence of country – the theme for this year’s NAIDOC celebrations.

As part of NAIDOC Week celebrations, the ceremony at the AWM was attended by VCDF VADM Ray Griggs, representing the CDF and Secretary, CAF AIRMSHL Geoff Brown and VIPS from Defence and the indigenous community.

VADM Griggs said this year’s NAIDOC Week’s theme was ‘Serving Country: Centenary and Beyond’.

“I’m really pleased that the NAIDOC committee chose this year’s theme because it gives us an opportunity to reflect on the service of all indigenous Australians,” he said.

“Not only those who have served in the ADF and its forebears organisations, but those indigenous members of the public service who have played a crucial role in the wider Defence organisation.”

The ceremony, held in biting cold weather in front of 150 people, was supported with performances by the Gundawna National Indigenous Children’s Choir and Australia’s Federation Guard.

In a moving gesture, AWM Director Brendan Nelson was presented with Aboriginal and a Torres Strait Islander flags that were raised for the first time on operations at Camp Baird in the UAE, during NAIDOC Week last year.

Despite the weather, LAC Michael Cumbers, of Australia’s Federation Guard, volunteered to be part of the catafalque party. LAC Cumbers, an indigenous Air Force member from the Kamilaroi tribe near Coonaabarabran in NSW, said he always tried to attend Defence indigenous events when possible.

“I like to volunteer for those events,” he said. “I have a great deal of respect for our people and those that have served before me and made the ultimate sacrifice.”

LAC Cumbers said that as far as he knows, he is the only member of his family to have served in the ADF. “It means a great deal to me and it’s an honour to participate.”

VADM Griggs spoke of advances in indigenous service.

“When I reflect on the last century, I don’t think we should shy away from our history, as difficult as that may be a times, but on the other hand we should not be shy in talking about the very real advances that have been made across Defence as we seek a culture that includes and not a culture that excludes,” he said.

“Today, there’s active indigenous participation in the ADF from subna- tives to special forces.

“We know it’s not always been that way. There’s evidence of indigenous service in past colonial navies and mili- tias, but the numbers were very small.”

VADM Griggs told the attendees that early in World War I Austali- ans of non-European descent were barred from joining Australia’s military forces and it wasn’t until 1917 that those restrictions were lifted.

“It’s important to remember that despite those restrictions, many indigenous Australians volunteered to serve in the AIF,” VADM Griggs said.

An estimated 800 to 1300 indigenous personnel served in the AIF, many thousands in World War II and more in Korea, Vietnam and beyond.

“In honestly proud to be part of an ADF and broader Defence team that reflects so positively to the contributions that indigenous Australians have made and continue to make to our security,” VADM Griggs said.


CPL Nick Wiseman

A SOLO display of traditional dance from indigenous Air Force member LAC Coen Henry led the Operation Accordon NAIDOC Week celebrations on July 6.

Members of coalition forces took the opportunity to experience the history and traditions of indigenous Australians at Camp Baird in the UAE.

Commander JTF633 MAJGEN Craig Orme said LAC Henry gave a fantastic performance and expressed his sincere thanks for his contribution to mark the start of the NAIDOC Week celebrations.

“I want to congratulate Coen on his leadership. Leadership is not really about rank but is about leading others and respecting one another,” he said.

“I think this is a great opportunity for all of us to further understand not only who we are as a nation but where we’ve come from. I thank him for leading and representing his people today.”

LAC Henry, of Combat Support Unit 11, presented traditional Aboriginal artwork he created to MAAGEN Orme and CO CSU 11 SGNLDR Sonia King.

Senior members at Camp Baird also took part in a traditional smoking ceremony, which cleanses the meeting space before formal proceedings.

LAC Henry’s Aboriginal heritage traces back through his father. His grandfather was from the Wiradjuri tribe in Central NSW, and his grand-

mother from the Barkindji tribe near Mildura.

“It was a great honour to showcase my culture, not only to my colleagues but coalition partners to share and spread that message out,” he said. LAC Henry said it was great to be part of the celebrations on his first operational deployment.

“Although I was nervous, anxious, excited and all those mixed emotions, this will be a highlight of my deploy- ment and something I am proud of,” he said.

“I’m really appreciative of the ADF to be able to show and display this event in front of my colleagues for them to understand and appreciate the meanings of my culture. It will be an experience I will never forget.”

Catafalque Party member LAC Michael Cumbers in position around the Armistice Stone at the Australian War Memorial.

Photo: Lauren Larking

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NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC originally stood for National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself. This year’s theme is Serving Country: Centenary and Beyond.

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First anniversary secured

SONLDR Richard Mclntyre

FEW people, if any, have contributed as much to the training and development of future Air Force officers as SGT Ian ‘Chalky’ Thomas.

Late last year, SGT Thomas was diagnosed with motor neurone disease – the name given to a group of diseases in which the nerve cells controlling the muscles that enable us to move, speak, breathe and swallow undergo degeneration until they no longer function.

However, SGT Thomas is a fighter and has never wavered in his commitment to adventurous training at Officers’ Training School (OTS) and has continued to assist in training for as long as his body has allowed.

On June 6, colleagues past and present, friends and family gathered at OTS headquarters to formally recognise SGT Thomas’s achievements and celebrate his time in the Air Force – both permanent and reserve service.

DCAF AVM Leo Davies presented SGT Thomas with aCAF Gold Commendation for his achievement in the field of adventurous training.

SGT Thomas said he was humbled to receive the CAF Commendation for doing something he found easy and lots of fun.

“I reflect on the adventurous training experience of abseiling where I’ve dispatched hundreds of participants, telling some to ‘dry your eyes and focus on the process’, well now I’m at my own cliff edge and I hope that I’m brave and resilient as I step over the edge,” he said.

For 19 years, SGT Thomas has been influential in the inception and continual development of adventurous training at OTS.

Following a posting to Army’s Adventurous Training Centre (now Adventurous Training Wing), the former electrophotographer posted out-of-category in 1994 to RAAF College (RAAFCOL) – which was at that time responsible for the Air Force Office of the Adjutant General, where he was instrumental in the design and incorporation of adventurous training into the officer training program.

He was responsible for developing and delivering RAAFCOL’s initial adventurous training activities, which were conducted at Mount Macedon, Buchan, a small town located in east Sale, SGT Thomas conducted water rafting and adventure training activities all in the one area, such as caving, abseiling, navigation and white water rafting.

Over the past two decades at RAAFCOL, SGT Thomas has displayed the highest technical leadership in refining adventurous training work practices, procedures and structure.

He achieved this by assisting in the development of Exercise Control Section as a formal part of OTS. This was well before adventurous training was seen as a vital contribution to the development of resilience in trainees.

SGT Thomas has remained a dedicated member of the Active Reserve since his discharge from the Permanent Air Force in July 2000.

His ongoing commitment to OTS is a testimony to his character and passion.

During his affiliation with the school, he has contributed to the graduation of more than 3000 Air Force officers.

CO OTS Wgcdr Davin Augustine said SGT Thomas’s service ‘was unique, ‘I’ve seen a lot of Air Force family moments in my career – this one takes the cake,’ he said.

When OTS moved to RAAF Base East Sale, SGT Thomas conducted evaluations of areas suitable to conduct adventurous training activities within the region.

He ultimately recommended Buchan, a small town located in East Gippsland, and this single location enables students to undertake multiple activities all in the one area, such as caving, abseiling, navigation and white water rafting.

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“Chalky is truly part of the furniture here at OTS. A 19-year commitment to Air Force is one thing; 19 years committed to a single unit is quite another.”

Wgcdr Davin Augustine said he embodied Air Force Values. “To be able to farewell Chalky in front of his friends, his family and with his dignity intact was really very special,” he said.

Although SGT Thomas is now confined to a wheelchair and his speech has slowed, he continues to be a role model for his family and friends.

He is currently preparing for his last outdoor recreational pursuit – single track mountain bike.

He has upgraded his trike, adding a fourth wheel for stability and an electric motor for forward propulsion.

He is also installing electric brakes controlled by a tube in his mouth that he either sucks on to brake, or blows on to release.

He said his next project was to design electric steering.

“l’m not sure which body part I’ll be using for controlling that,” he said.

His wife Carolyn is also making him a full-body harness.

“This will prevent me falling off as I bash and fly over the bumps,” SGT Thomas said.

SGT Thomas has left a lasting impression on staff and students of OTS.

His legacy will live on and future students will continue to benefit from his vision for adventurous training in the officer training program.

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First anniversary secured

SONLDR Richard Mclntyre

COMBAT Support Group and No. 95 Wing have celebrated the first birthday of two of the Air Force’s youngest musterners.

The Air Force Security and Air Force Police squadrons, along with their Airfield Defence Guard partners and three of the Air Force’s youngest Squadrons, No. 1, 2 and 3 Security Forces Squadrons, marked the anniversary on July 17.

Born out of an increased security requirement in Air Force, the Security Forces squadrons grew from No. 1 and 2 Airfield Defence Guard squadrons while the musterners grew from the now disbanded Security Police musterners.

“OC SWSG GPCAPT Peter Davis reflected on the year. “It has been a challenging and significant year for our Security Forces squadrons and I am extremely pleased of the squadrons’ achievements thus far,” he said.

“The Security Forces squadrons continue to support not just our own forces domestically, but also those of our coalition forces, both overseas in support of Operation Slipper and Operation Acheron and recently at RAAF Base Pearce in support of Operation Southern Indian Ocean.

“Our Security Forces are responsible for providing mandated Security Forces guard functions on both domestic and expeditionary deployments. They have both a physically and mentally demanding role that will only grow as the Air Force starts to take delivery of our new air assets.”

The Security Forces squadrons have had members on duty providing real-time security at significant Air Force exercise and operations since their inception, including the Centenary of Military Aviation Air Show, Operation Philippines Assist and Exercise Precision Red.

Military working dog handler AWM Elise Kermeen, of 2SECFOR, recently graduated from the inaugural Air Force Security course at the RAAF Security and Fire School with her military working dog OZo.

“It is a challenging role, but I wouldn’t be anywhere else,” she said.

When Air Force starts to receive the next generation of aircraft, Security Forces squadrons and musterners are expected to grow by about 70 positions and will continue to be at the forefront of force protection.

SGT Ian ‘Chalky’ Thomas is farewelled from the RAAF with numerous presentations, including a CAF Gold Commendation presented by DCAF AVM Leo Davies, Chalky’s family, from left, daughters Jacinta and Renee, wife Carolyn, son Nathan and extra helpers to hold all the gifts, with AVM Davies and CO Officers’ Training School WGCDR Davin Augustine. Left, SGT Thomas on his modified trike.

“Chalky is truly part of the furniture here at OTS. A 19-year commitment to Air Force is one thing; 19 years committed to a single unit is quite another.”

Wgcdr Davin Augustine said he embodied Air Force Values. “To be able to farewell Chalky in front of his friends, his family and with his dignity intact was really very special,” he said.

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His legacy will live on and future students will continue to benefit from his vision for adventurous training in the officer training program.
FORCING FRIENDSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY

OFFCDT Alexandra Hendry and Eamon Hamilton

CLOSE ties are being forged with the Coober Pedy community, helping Air Force to manage one of the world’s biggest test ranges.

The remote outback town of Coober Pedy is renowned for its opal mining and underground residences and happens to sit adjacent to the Woomera Test Range. At more than 124,000 square kilometres, the range requires a dedicated Compliance Monitoring Team (CMT) to protect the Woomera Prohibited Area.

To reach remote areas, the CMT often works alongside a No. 38 Squadron (38SQN) King Air, and operates out of Coober Pedy. The CMT and 38SQN visited Coober Pedy’s youth centre from May 28-30.

The visit enabled the team to engage with the community on a more personal level, according to CMT Trials Security Manager SQNLDR Darren Shorter.

“We wanted to be role models for the young people, to show them the opportunities that are available if they work hard,” SQNLDR Shorter said.

“Engaging with Coober Pedy also gives us an opportunity to learn from its indigenous community about traditional lands, culture and language.”

FTLT Anna Watson and FLGOFF Aimee Mocatta, both pilots with 38SQN, gave 11 young people a tour of the cockpit,” Ms Reynolds said.

“Anna and Aimee were extremely professional and fantastic role models.” The pilots also spent time with 24 members of the Active Girls Group, an outreach program for young indigenous women.

“We spoke to the girls about our experiences as pilots and being in the military, and they were particularly interested in places we had visited overseas,” FLGOFF Mocatta said.

“They also asked a lot of questions about our patches on our uniforms and what they symbolise.”

Woomera Test Range Director Reg Carruthers said the CMT would continue to engage with the local community.

“The CMT has conducted a number of community engagement activities this year including a visit to Coober Pedy Area School to talk about Anzac Day and opportunities available to the students in Defence,” Mr Carruthers said.

“These visits were well received and greatly assist our ability to positively engage and influence the local community.”

The King Air flies 4.5-hour sorties over segments of the Woomera Prohibited Area, which include a Safety Exclusion Zone Patrol associated with trials support.

According to Mr Carruthers, 38SQN support has proven a force-multiplier for the CMT, helping them monitor non-Defence user access across the area.

“Integrated air-ground operations have heightened the perception of a sustained presence within the Woomera Prohibited Area, which in turn helps promote voluntary compliance,” Mr Carruthers said.

Books for all

ACW Chloe Stevenson and AC Luke Gilbert

SIX RAAF Base Tindal personnel have presented books to children in a remote Western Australian community as part of the Books in Homes Primary Programme, led by Senior Australian Defence Force Officer and CO No. 17 Squadron WgCdr Mark Larter, the team travelled to Yakaraka on June 29.

WgCdr Larter said Air Force was eager to support the Books in Homes Primary Programme at Yakaraka Community School.

“to be able to visit an extremely remote Aboriginal community and present a special warning books to children on behalf of GAF was a humbling experience,” he said.

17Sqn’s Air Force Headquarters, 17Sqn and No. 75 Squadron stakeholder interaction, the teamwork component of New Horizon really came to the fore.

“Being invited to the community allowed us to understand its culture and was an honour for our team. I am very proud of them and the part they have played in delivering books that will help young students to further their reading and writing skills.”

The Books in Homes Primary Programme is a charity foundation with a focus on providing quality reading material for children living in socio-economic circumstances across Australia.

The five other 17Sqn personnel

28-30.

A 75Sqn Hornet conducts a flypast, and left, WgCdr Mark Larter presents a book pack to a young student.

Recognition for a job well done

FLTLT Ben Gray

REPRESENTATIVES from Defence Industry who participated in the development of Air Force’s General Purpose Uniform (GPU) were recognised at a small reception at RAAF Williams – Laverton on June 16.

Deputy Air Commander Australia and chair of the GPU Project Steering Group, AIRCdre Stephen Mercedel, presented representatives from Bock Textile, Australian Defence Apparel and the Defence Science and Technology Organisation with plaques and a swatch of the GPU production material.

“We are really appreciative of the effort you made to ensure our project came together and was produced within a very short time frame,” he said.

The roll out of the GPU to Air Force personnel in Zone 1 – over 50 northern Australian bases – began this month.

FLTLT Ben Gray

AIRCdre Steven Meredith presents SQNLDR Tony Blunden with an Air Force medallion. Photo: AB Cassie McBride

Personnel from Headquarters Air Command GPU project were also recognised.

SQNLDR Anthony Blunden, who worked as Project Manager for the GPU, praised the flexibility of personnel during the development phase of the project.

“As a completely new uniform, this was something that we could cut once and was good to go,” he said.

“there were many times when the project could have been delayed due to increasing complexity, but the industry and DSTO team really worked hard with us to get it right and produce something that gives us a unique and easily recognisable Air Force identity.”

Introduction of the Air Force GPU will be cost neutral over the long term due to uniform production changes, depletion of existing stocks and reforms to standard equipment issue.

Yakanarra Community School Principal Helen Unwin passed on her sincere thanks to all involved in creating such a memorable day.

She also remarked on how easily the children warmed to the visiting personnel – a fact she said was not always easily attainable.

“The children, and some of the adults, we still talking about the visit and now know more about the work that different Air Force personnel do,” she said.

“we will certainly remember this book giving day for a long time to come.”

Air Force is sponsoring the Books in Homes Primary Programme in 2014.

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Merici College

Caters for ADF Families in the ACT

Recognition for a job well done
Changing of the guard

ACM Mark Binskin becomes the fourth Air Force officer to command the ADF, SGT Dave Morley and Darryl Johnston report.

Despite Canberra’s icy weather, ACM David Hurley and ACM Binskin were given a warm reception from the large crowd that braved the elements to attend the CDF Change of Command Parade on June 30.

ADF members and Defence public servants lined Thomas Construction Square at RAAF base Williamtown.

Dozens of special guests sat in the VIP area rugged up against the blustery weather, while lookers peered from office windows. A formation of four F/A-18s flew low overhead to mark the occasion.

ACM Binskin said his aim was for the Defence Force to succeed at all levels of operations from humanitarian and disaster response through to high-end warfighting.

“Most importantly, during my tenure, we will work together to fully understand, address and put behind us the legacy issues that have come to the surface over the past three years, detailing how some of our people have been poorly treated, abused or assaulted. Clearly, their treatment was, and remains, unacceptable,” he said.

“We must learn from the successes and failures of our past to ensure that we transition as a capable and professional force that is trusted and respected by all Australians and the region.”

He said he would continue to deal with unacceptable behaviour within Defence ranks.

“I know we are capable of facing up to the challenges; we are recognition Defence faces and challenges,” he said.

“I am always impressed by the passion and professionalism you at work, in the field, on base or spending time observing service and support. I am pleased that we have met the majority of these priorities and made significant progress on the remaining points.”

“We have achieved our objectives and concluded operations in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands. We have completed our mission to train the Afghan National Army in Uruguay and we continue to assist and support the Afghan Security Forces as their training, logistic and sustainment functions mature.”

GEN Hurley thanked ADF members and their families for their service and support.

“I have encountered many of you and spending time observing you at work, in the field, on base or in our ships,” he said.

“I am always impressed by the passion and professionalism you apply to the work you do.”

As he left the ceremony he was accorded a 17-gun salute by Australia’s Federation Guard.

CDF ACM Mark Binskin returns salute to Australia’s Federation Guard at the change of command parade in Canberra.

The previous incumbents, from left, ACMs Sir Frederick Scherger, Sir Neville McNamara and Angus Houston.

ACM Mark Binskin is the fourth Air Force officer to take command of our Defence Forces.

He follows ACM Sir Frederick Scherger who was Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 1961-1966; ACM Sir Neville McNamara, Chief of the Defence Force Staff 1982-1984; and ACM Angus Houston, CDF 2005-2011.

ACM Sir Frederick Scherger

He transferred to the RAAF from Duntroon in 1965. He was a highly effective AOC of No. 10 Operational Group and then the 1st Tactical Air Force in the Southwest Pacific Area in World War II. Among his achievements was his commitment to the construction of strategic airfields in northern Australia and the strong links he established with the American armed forces, an initiative which formalised the replacement of the RAAF by the USAF as the RAAF’s major ally. He died in January 1984.

ACM Sir Neville McNamara

He enlisted in the RAAF in 1941. During World War II he flew as an instructor before completing an operational tour on the Southeast Pacific Area. In April 1971, he was appointed deputy commander of Australian Forces Vietnam and commander RAAN. He acquired a deep understanding of Army/Air Force activities by flying on operations with No. 9 Squadron’s helicopters in support of No. 1 Australian Task Force in Phuoc Tuy province. He worked tirelessly to improve relationships within Defence at all levels. He died on May 7 this year.

ACM Angus Houston


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Squadron marks milestone

IN RECOGNITION of 25 years of continuous service, No. 13 (City of Darwin) Squadron was presented with a Squadron Standard at a consecration ceremony at RAAF Base Darwin on June 24.

Northern Territory Administrator Sally Thomas presented the colour by order of the Governor-General.

CO 13SQN WGCDR Wes Perrett said it was a proud moment for the squadron.

“This colour is awarded in honour of those 13SQN personnel who served during World War II, in subsequent campaigns and the 13SQN personnel who continue to serve proudly today,” WGCDR Perrett said.

“13SQN is not the largest Air Force squadron, but it has a critical role in maintaining one of Australia’s most strategically important air bases.”

The squadron was formed in Darwin on June 1, 1940, and deployed on operational service to Laha and Namelia in the Dutch East Indies before being withdrawn to Darwin in 1942 where it played an active role in the defence of the city.

It was disbanded on January 11, 1946, however, on July 1, 1989, approval was given to form an Active Reserve Squadron in Darwin, to be known as No. 13 (City of Darwin) Squadron.

Twenty-one years later, on July 1, 2010, 13SQN and No. 321 Expeditionary Combat Support Squadron, of RAAF Base Darwin, merged to form a single squadron responsible for permanent air base support to enable air operations.

13SQN is one of only two RAAF squadrons to receive a US Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation, which it received, along with a Banda Sea Pennant, for outstanding performance of duty in action from April 13 to August 25, 1942. It also received battle honours for Eastern Waters 1940-1942, 1944 and Pacific 1941-1945.

In 2000 the squadron was awarded an Air Commander Australia Commendation for outstanding service to the ADF and RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal in support of Operations Warden and Tanager in East Timor.

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Aussie-trained loadies

Eamon Hamilton

THE first two students to complete their training at the ground-breaking C-17A Globemaster loadmaster training facility are now flying with No. 36 Squadron.

For more than 20 years, every C-17A loadmaster in the world had been trained in the US – and from 2006 until 2013, Australia sent loadmasters to America to train on the C-17A alongside their American counterparts.

However, in February, Australia became the first other country to have its own loadmaster training facilities.

Sgt Jeffrey Calvert and Christian Allison completed the first course in May.

‘OC No. 86 Wing GPCAPT Guy Wilson said having local training facilities offered the RAAF untold flexibility.

‘Previously, the number of C-17 loadmasters we could train each year was reliant on there being enough positions in the American training system,' GPCAPT Wilson said.

‘Local training provides flexibility in the number of loadmasters we train.

‘Over the C-17A fleet’s lifetime, the cost of our local training facilities is significantly less than conducting these courses overseas.

‘Local training facilities also benefit everyone in Australia who needs to conduct trials and training.'
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Come in springer spaniel

James Cook takes on MWD care

CPL Mark Doran

JAMES Cook University (JCU) Veterinary Hospital in Townsville became the provider for RAAF military working dogs (MWD) health services on July 1.

Basic treatment and preventative health care through to the management of emergency cases and serious illnesses for MWDs is now provided by a team of JCU veterinarians, veterinary nurses and final year students from the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences.

JCU Director Veterinary Practices Margaret Reilly said the Working Dog Clinic initiative offered Air Force the complete gamut of treatment for MWDs.

“We cover everything from the routine vaccinations through to the high-level cases, such as spinal surgery and clinical pathology,” Dr Reilly said.

“At JCU we are very cognisant of the MWDs requirement to travel to remote areas in other countries and the need to be vaccinated for diseases unusual to Australia.”

Sgt James Notaras of No. 2 Security Forces Squadron, is the SNCO in charge of the MWD Section at RAAF Base Townsville and said there were also environmental differences faced by MWDs in tropical north Queensland such as heat stress, venomous snakes, cane toads and paralysis tick.

“Heat exposure and heat stress are our biggest concerns, so it is important for a handler to identify with their dog to recognise the signs and manage it,” Sgt Notaras said.

Dr Reilly said working with the MWDs and their handlers had brought a different aspect of animal care.

“We have to prepare the dogs for export and they are similar to elite athletes,” she said.

“Air Force dog handlers are very dedicated and know exactly what condition their dogs are in, which is information that is very important to us to help diagnose and treat them.”

The MWD Section forms an integral part of the security and protection services at Townsville and a force multiplier in times of conflict.

Sgt Notaras said even with their basic and advanced courses, military working dog handlers had only limited veterinary capabilities.

“The JCU team care about our dogs, the job they do for Defence and how we can best take care of them,” he said.

Thank you for saving Bruce

FLT LT Michelle Smith

IN GRATITUDE for saving the life of explosive detection dog (EDD) Bruce, a certificate of appreciation has been presented to James Cook University (JCU) Veterinary Hospital.

DFO 27 (City of Toowoomba) Squadron Wg cdr George Hodgson and SMOCIC AFSEC No. 2 Security Forces Squadron Sgt James Notaras presented Dr Margaret Reilly the certificate from Commander Combat Support Group.

During a course at Townsville High Range training area in November, Bruce impaled himself on a tree stump.

Under the care of military working dog handler Sgt David Skeels, Bruce was transported to JCU Veterinary hospital – the closest facility – where he underwent a five-hour operation.

“We were able to save his life, and I will forever be grateful, particularly considering the initial prognosis was amputation or euthanasia,” Sgt Skeels said.

EDD Bruce has now fully recovered and is fit for duty.

Explosives Detector Dog Handler CPL Jesse White, of No 1 Security Forces Squadron, with recruit dog Casey, an English Springer Spaniel who is in training and loves tennis balls.

CPL Aaron Curran

A NEW addition to the explosive detection dog section at RAAF Base Williamtown is sure to touch people’s hearts through his long ears and gentle eyes.

Explosive detection dog (EDD) Casey is a 15-month-old English springer spaniel and the first of the breed to serve in the Air Force.

Sgt David Skeels, of No. 1 Security Forces EDD Section at Williamtown, said Casey was chosen to come back to Williamtown for further assessments.

Other Air Force EDD breeds in service include German short-haired pointers, Belgian malinois and kelpies.

Springers have reputations as successful working dogs that are driven, eager to please and quick to learn.

“They are small in size and are an advantage for handlers,” Sgt Skeels said.

“They go into confined spaces and, because they have great stamina and a natural ability to actively search and hunt, they are perfect for the tasks asked of a detection dog.”

Sgt Skeels said Casey had settled in, started his training and was progressing.

“This is a very special dog, and he has a personalisation of his own and a lot of character,” he said.

“Casey is quite headstrong and has good environmental conditioning. He’s fanatical about tennis balls and likes long walks on the beach.”

Over the next few months Casey will be put through intensive training that will involve odour imprinting and recognition, off-lead directional training, basic obedience, gunfire saturation and environmental conditioning.

“As part of Casey’s initial testing he was exposed to live-fire exercises at Singleton Army Range,” Sgt Skeels said.

“He was taken to Canberra Airport and exposed to the crowds, baggage carousels, taken on to aircraft and the flightline area. During all this Casey displayed no aversion to any of these new environments or stimuli.”

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SONLDR Fiona Van Der Snoek

THE first course of junior officers to complete the redeveloped Initial Officer Course (IOC) graduated from Officers’ Training School (OTS) at RAAF Base East Sale on June 20.

The 26 graduates paraded in front of Reviewing Officer DCAF AVM Leo Davies,OTS staff and students, family and friends. AVM Davies commended the graduating class on having the skill and courage to complete the first step in their officer careers.

“Today, all of you are becoming commissioned officers, with the rights and special responsibilities that go with being a leader,” he said.

“Each of you has made a commitment to serve your country, and I ask that you do it with pride.

“As an officer, you will now be required to develop, attain, and maintain the very highest standards of integrity, professional achievement and personal conduct. You must continue to uphold the standards of a proud service whose traditions were forged in the defence of Australia and maintained by many who preceded you.”

CO OTS WGCDF Davin Augustine said he was proud of the students’ achievements during their 17 weeks of training.

“As the pilot course for the new OTS curriculum, this group of students have paved the way for those who follow them,” WGCDF Augustine said.

“I congratulate them on their achievements and welcome them to the wider Air Force family.”

Perpetual trophies were awarded to the students who displayed excellence in leadership and military qualities, physical training, military skills, and ground defence.

PLTOFF Joshua Goewie received the Leadership and Military Qualities Award for outstanding leadership and professionalism.

FLGOFF Madelaine Wood was presented with the Physical Training Student of Merit Award.

OFFCDT Hayley Grieve received the Military Skills Instructor Award and FLGOFF Joshua Weeks the Ground Defence Training Award.

Under the new IOC construct, course content and methodologies have been aligned to recommendations arising from the Broderick Review, New Horizon and Pathways to Change.

The course is now more focused on contemporary air power, values-based behaviours and experiential learning allowing students to practise the skills they will require in their first posting and beyond.

Students will now either continue to further training units – in the case of OFFCDTs – or take up their first posting in Air Force.

See page 21 to read a graduate’s experiences during the redeveloped Initial Officers’ Course at Officers’ Training School.

DCAF AVM Gavin Davies speaks with FLGOFF Chloe Lowndes on parade, above, and presents the Leadership and Military Qualities award to PLTOFF Joshua Goewie, right, at the graduation ceremony. Photos: CPL Steve Duncan
A FULL-scale replica of the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) has been commissioned to study the effects of electromagnetic compatibility and interference on the aircraft's electronic systems.

Dubbed the Iron Bird, the model was built by Defence Science and Technology Organisation at its Edinburgh facility in South Australia.

It was unveiled on July 3 by Defence Minister David Johnston, former Program Manager of New Air Combat Capability AVM Kym Osley and Chief Defence Scientist Alex Zelinsky.

Iron Bird will be tested under simulated electromagnetic conditions during the acquisition and through-life sustainment of the F-35A.

DSTO's lead scientist on the program, Andrew Walters, said all aircraft were exposed to electromagnetic radiation from sources including lightning, static discharge, telecommunications and radars.

"This exposure can interfere with aircraft communications and sensor systems, cockpit displays and even flight control functions, which can impair the performance and safety of an aircraft and its crew," he explained.

"The robustness of an avionics system to such radiation must be designed into the aircraft, as well as monitored throughout its life."

Senator Johnston said DSTO's test methods provided rapid, cost-effective means of assessing and monitoring the aircraft's ability to withstand electromagnetic exposure.

"The data captured during DSTO testing will help in providing potential reductions in the cost of owning the JSF fleet and enhancing the aircraft's capability," he said.

"What it means is the difference between being able to hit by lightning and safely recover at an airfield and to know that that can happen. It's the difference in knowing that if you do end up flying near power lines your digital flight controls are going to work correctly."

"It's about making sure that the electrical fuses in your weapons activate when they should and that things like radars, radar and systems don't interfere with the operation of each other and don't cause problems in other aircraft." AVM Osley said the framework of the Iron Bird was not that critical.

"It looks like a facsimile of the F-35 and the insiders don't count so much as the surface of the aeroplane, which has been painstakingly recreated by the technicians at DSTO and local industry. It is incredibly complex, with all the curves we see on the mockup being correct," he said.

"What this enables us to do is test at zero knots and zero altitude all those things we have been talking about, instead of actually waiting until we have a warm body inside an aeroplane flying at 35,000 feet near a thunderstorm."

"We are the leaders in this field and it's very important that we contribute in these areas, and that we continue to invest in them and also reap the rewards and international recognition as we have with this project," AVM Osley said.

"It is through the innovative and critical work of DSTO that the F-35 program is remaining very much on track for the RAAP to declare initial operational capability in 2020." AVM Osley recognised several people who had contributed to the success of Iron Bird.

"These include Murray Webb and Dale Goldfinch who did innovative and high-quality work in fabricating the frame and crafting the outer shape, Allan Quinton who led and guided the design, manufacture and assembly, and Stuart Thomson who provided the initial vision and planning for undertaking the construction," he said.

"The range of activities this year covers a wide spectrum of military activities extending from the training and support areas through to the continuing front-line operations, military exercises and humanitarian efforts," he said.

"It’s pleasing to see record numbers of parliamentarians finding time in their busy schedules to get an experience of life in our armed forces," said Senator Johnston.

CDF ACM Mark Binsk,in highlighted the mutual benefits for AFP personnel and parliamentarians.

"The program provides a unique opportunity to showcase Defence, and to build on that spirit of shared understanding between the men and women who form the foundation of our Defence capability, and our elected representatives," he said.

"Later this year there will be an opportunity for Defence Force members to be attached to parliamentary offices during a sitting week in Canberra to further cement the relationship."
T he Joint Task Force 633/23 Air Component’s C-130 Hercules currently operating in the Middle East Region.

The component’s maintenance detachment from No. 77 Squadron in Rockhampton is deployed throughout the Middle East Region. This provides air-to-air refueling and logistic support over the region to support various missions and additional C-130 Hercules that provide air-refuelling and air-to-ground support.

The 333rd AEW and Space Wing detachment from No. 77 Squadron in Rockhampton is deployed with the intention to support the transport aircraft. As part of Operation Hercules (operational support) as of July 1, some maintenance personnel fly with the detachment in case of emergency for additional support. A detachment from No. 37 Squadron in Rockhampton is deployed with the intention to support the transport aircraft as well.

The detachment currently consists of two C-130J Hercules and operates and trains personnel in and out of Afghanistan and other ISAF destinations in the Middle East theatre. The detachment is responsible for personnel transferring into and out of Afghanistan to support the Australian and ISAF forces. The detachment is currently operating in the United Arab Emirates, operates and trains personnel in and out of Afghanistan and is responsible for the maintenance of the aircraft by day, while their counterparts fly with operational support as of July 1.

The detachment maintains two C-130J Hercules in the United Arab Emirates, operates and trains personnel in and out of Afghanistan and other ISAF destinations in the Middle East theatre.

“We have 21 men and one woman here. The detachment’s Commanding Officer (operational support) as of July 1, some maintenance personnel fly with the detachment in case of emergency for additional support.” – FLTLT Gary Warne, the detachment’s Commanding Officer (operational support) as of July 1.

The detachment reports. There’s a tireless group of Air Force personnel working through the night to keep the air bridge open for Operations Slipper, Accord and Manito in the Middle East, LEUT Peter Croce reports.

The detachment maintains two C-130J Hercules in the United Arab Emirates, operates and trains personnel in and out of Afghanistan and other ISAF destinations in the Middle East theatre.

“Six days out of seven we have maintenance personnel either flying with the aircraft for on-site control or at our detachment office to fill out required paperwork and another round of checks to ensure the aircraft is safe and ready for the next mission.”

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“On 13 July we deployed into Afghanistan to carry out a door landing gear replacement on an aircraft in Kabul.” – FLTLT Gary Warne, the detachment’s Commanding Officer (operational support) as of July 1.

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July 26 marks the 74th anniversary of the formation of the RAAF Nursing Service, as Unit Histories Officer Roz Turner, of the Office of Air Force History, writes as we continue our series about landmark events in history in the 100th year of military aviation in Australia.

Flying sisters take flight

HEY cared for the sick and wounded during World War II and soon became known as the flying sisters.

They were members of the RAAF Nursing Service (RAAFNS) which was established on July 26, 1940, with 40 or so nurses.

The first matron-in-chief was Margaret Irene Lang, a former Army Sister. Under her leadership, the nurses became highly regarded for their work on medevac flights from New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Morotai and Borneo. When the Empire Air Training Scheme started at the end of 1940, 52 sisters from RAAF NS were attached to the RAAF Medical Staff escorting parties of trainee aircrew personnel on ships to US, Canada and Britain. And by December 1945 the service had grown to 616 members.

The RAAFNS was modelled on the Princess Mary’s Royal Air Force Nursing Service in Britain. At the time, all nurses were appointed to four-year short-service commissions with a maximum extension of three years, and only the principal matron was permitted to hold a permanent commission. Pay scales were about two-thirds of the male rate.

Nurses also had to resign if they married. Unlike the WAAAF, members of the RAAFNS also routinely worked overseas, often in combat zones, side by side with their male counterparts.

Also, despite the WAAAF disbursing soon after the war, the RAAFNS was retained as a continuing and valuable service.

In November 1942, Senior Sister Jean Wheatley led the first group of RAAF nurses into a combat zone, arriving with five other sisters to staff the No. 3 Medical Receiving Station at Port Moresby.

The station operated undercanvas close to Ward’s Strip in June Valley, and was in a direct line for enemy air raids.

The Japanese attacked the airfield the second night after the nurses arrived.

For her deeds, Senior Sister Wheatley became the first member of the RAAF Nursing Service to be decorated when she was appointed an Associate of the Royal Red Cross on March 10, 1944.

From 1955 senior sisters became flight officers and sisters became section officers.

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During the Korean War, RAAFNS members flew in RAAF Dakotas conducting aeromedical evacuations. From 1951, 12,000 casualties were air-lifted to Iwakuni in Japan. The last medical evacuation flight from Korea to Iwakuni and then to Australia was in July 1956, when the entire RAAF contingent returned to Australia.

During the 1950s RAAFNS had a change in rank titles. From 1955 senior sisters became flight officers and sisters became section officers.

From July 1965 until 1972 the conflict in Vietnam necessitated aeromedical evacuation of casualties from Vietnam to Butterworth, with the last aeromedical evacuation flight in 1972.

Over these years more than 3000 service casualties were evacuated, escorted by nursing sisters and medical orderlies from Vietnam to Australia.

On May 1, 1977, the RAAF Nursing Service was integrated into the RAAF Medical Branch and from this date male nursing officers became eligible for appointment to the RAAF.

On January 1, 1978, female nursing officers received pay equal to that of their male counterparts.

Today, nurses work side by side with surgeons and other medical staff, both in Australia and overseas on deployment.

For her deeds, Senior Sister Irene Lang.

Nursing officers still on the job today, as demonstrated by FLTLT Ben James conducting a health check in Cambodia during Pacific Partnership 14.

Photo: Michael Brooke

The first matron-in-chief of the RAAF Nursing Service, Margaret Irene Lang.

Nursing officers still on the job today, as demonstrated by FLTLT Ben James conducting a health check in Cambodia during Pacific Partnership 14. Photo: Michael Brooke

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Support to our neighbours in 2002 included RAAF nursing officers sent with a contingent in response to the Bali bombings, to assist with patient care and repatriation to Australian capital cities. In 2004, following the tsunami in Indonesia, RAAF nursing officers provided medical and evacuation services for those affected by the disaster, and in 2005 again responded promptly to another Bali bombing with medical and retrieval services.

Today, nurses work side by side with surgeons and other medical staff, both in Australia and overseas on deployment.
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22SQN’s new code of conduct

AN ADVISORY group at No. 22 (City of Sydney) Squadron has developed a new unit code of conduct for squadron members.

Last October, 22SQN at RAAF Base Richmond established an advisory group of corporal and sergeant representatives from each of its sections.

The group of 10-12 members meets monthly, facilitated by XO 22SQN SQNLDR Barry Cunningham, to present ideas and outcomes and suggestions provided to the squadron executive for consideration and implementation,” SQNLDR Cunningham said.

The first major issue addressed by the group was establishing a Unit Code of Conduct to capture the sentiments, beliefs and future expectations of squadron members in line with the Air Force values.

“The code of conduct refers to unit pride, Air Force values and self-discipline, as well as a statement capturing the ethos of the unit.”

SQNLDR Cunningham said the group then discussed the best way to implement the code of conduct.

“The advisory group decided the best method was to develop a short video that could be played during squadron induction sessions and to include the video on the unit website available for all to view,” he said.

The production of the video was coordinated by the group and filmed by No. 28 Squadron photographic staff. The video contains:  
- the CO’s welcome and commentary; 
- an explanation of the Air Force values and how they are infused with outcomes and suggestions provided to the squadron executive for consideration and implementation,“ SQNLDR Cunningham said. 
- an overview of the unit’s code of conduct; and 
- an explanation of the Air Force values and how they are infused with 22SQN.

“Overall, establishing and coordinating the advisory group to prepare, develop and implement the code of conduct and unit video has been seen as highly successful and well received by all squadron members,” SQNLDR Cunningham said.

The 22SQN code of conduct and video can be found on the squadron’s intranet.
CSG program continues

WGCDR Tim Anderson

FOUR years after embarking on a major capability transformation program, Combat Support Group is reaping rewards.

The Combat Support Improvement Program has begun to deliver significant benefits in matching resources to capability outputs in an effective and cost-conscious manner across the organisation.

Commander Combat Support Group AIRCDRE Tim Innes said Air Force was in a period of transformation not seen for a generation, as it realigned itself for future challenges and new platforms.

“This has required every component of the organisation to review and reform its structures and processes in order to deliver capability more cost-effectively and efficiently in support of the reinvestment in Air Force’s future needs,” AIRCDRE Innes said.

COS Combat Support Group GPCAPT Simon Sauer said the key to the program’s success was the use of specific project management methodology to ensure the outputs of the group’s reform projects were structured, transparent, evidence-based and repeatable.

“Transformation of the type we are undergoing is often difficult for the broader workforce to digest – especially where it involves the reinvestment of personnel and positions,” he said.

“This is why it is crucial that we utilise clear and structured methodology to ensure that we are first and foremost focused on capability delivery, and are not simply cutting around the edges.”

While Combat Support Group has up until recently used strategic civilian partners in its reform work, the next phase of the program will be a completely home-grown affair, with Air Force personnel both leading and delivering project methodology and outcomes.

“These personnel will have a significant task ahead of them over the next 12 to 18 months with a series of key capability projects on the horizon.

Air and ground movements and catering capability projects are already well advanced, and projects to redefine and restructure the administrative, supply, ground engineering, communications and information systems and health capabilities are all in the early stages of collecting data, and will deliver progressively through-out 2014.

AIRCDRE Innes said the program team needed to define combat support expeditionary requirements against the endorsed CSG concept of operations in each of the key capability projects – and to then build force generation processes within the permanent bases to maintain and sustain them.

It is expected this will result in financial and position savings. However, AIRCDRE Innes was adamant that no one within the group was about to lose their jobs as a result of the planned reform.

“There is no intention to force anyone out of the organisation involuntarily without the option of retraining,” he said.

“The retraining and transfer of personnel will take a number of posting cycles and should not affect the vast majority of personnel in their current postings.”

GPCAPT Sauer said the program would continue to engage and learn from the current workforce.

“The collection of high-quality data from the field is critical to the success of the program,” he said.

“Understanding the real-world value that combat support capabilities provide from the very people that deliver them will ensure that we build the best possible capability models, which will in turn ensure that we continue to deliver the high quality combat support that Air Force requires into the future.”

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Focus on supply solutions

WOFF Vicki Chapman

HEADQUARTERS Air Command (HQAC) senior members of the supply mustering have attended a two-day forum to discuss a range of logistics issues.

Seventy military and APS personnel from most Force Element Groups (FEGs) and other groups attended the forum at RAAF Base Tindal in May.

The theme for the forum was Pride in Your Profession and it was hosted by Air Commodore Logistics (A/COL) GPCAPT Marty Smith.

The aim of the annual forum is to identify issues affecting the organisation, including the military integrated logistics information system, stocktaking, governance, compliance and assurance, training and mentoring, as well as operating environments.

It is targeted towards sergeant warrant officers, as well as corporals identified for promotion, from the supply mustering, pilot officers and flying officers from the logistics specialisation and APS equivalents.

“This is a rare opportunity for the Air Force supply mustering leaders to come together to discuss and understand the changes, challenges and opportunities across the ADF logistics system, and identify where we need to apply extra effort and attention to ensure the system is doing what we need it to do in supporting the Air Force of today and tomorrow,” GPCAPT Smith said.

Some of these challenges were identified by speakers, including WOFF Mick Marshall, who spoke about Logistics Supply Flight operations within P3 Logistics Management Unit and Maritime Patrol Systems Program Office, and provided insight into the rigours of logistics support during Operation Southern Indian Ocean.

“ать have found the Supply Forum effectively promotes awareness of the wide-ranging change and challenges currently being experienced within the mustering,” WOFF Marshall said.

Networking was also an important part of the forum for OIC Supply Services FSGT Angela Jennison, of No. 19 Squadron at Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth.

“The best thing for me about coming down for this forum was being able to talk face-to-face with my peers about a large number of things that I have going on in Butterworth and how one would tackle them,” she said.

FSGT Jennison’s presentation highlighted 1950’s tempo, what to expect if posted to the squadron, the skill sets required, their supply tasks and various logistics reform and impending issues.

AIRC Logistics Systems WOFF Wayne Jones and SGT Prasad provided guidance on how to use various reports and perform stocktaking activities to ensure the 2012/14 stocktake cycle is completed and open the 2014/16 stocktake cycle.

PFSgt Dean Topp, of JSF Integrated Project Team, provided an insight to the capability of the F-35A, which prompted discussion about the impact to supply aspects and personnel with the aircraft’s impending arrival.

“The sustainment of the F-35A, although still in its infancy, is a highly technical construct that will offer a level of support that is evolutionary in meeting the demands needed to sustain a complex capability,” he said.

“It represents a fundamental shift in the way we sustain our aircraft where the focus will move away from spares ownership and total autonomy to one of aircraft availability and global partnerships.”

Presentations also included evolving logistics, such as the newly formed Local Site Administration cell at Headquarters Air Command, the Defence Logistics Transformation Program (DLTP) which is delivering modern, purpose-built wholesale storage facilities on Defence land, and new innovative ways of doing business at No. 33 Squadron and No. 17 Squadron.

Supply Senior Mustering Adviser WOFF Craig Napier, left, addresses the forum, above.

Supply Senior Mustering Adviser WOFF Craig Napier, left, addresses the forum, above.

ACW Chloe Stevenson

A WEEKLY community cooking group for Defence personnel and their spouses posted to RAAF Base Tindal is paying culinary dividends.

The group began in March of this year with a friendly mixture of rank and community members all making a flours mess in the name of taseful, budget friendly cuisine and sociable company.

The founder and organiser of the group, CPL Cynthia Gilchrist, said everyone was welcome, from master chefs to complete novices.

“Too far it’s been a great success,” CPL Gilchrist said. “We’ve had cupcake decorating with butter cream, beginning’s fondant cake decorating, fresh spaghetti and fet-tucine, Easter inspired hot-cross buns class, as well as the Anzac biscuit fundraiser for the Anzac Appeal … with the latest class being Asian-style steamed dumplings.”

Because of the remoteness of Tindal, finding off-base accommodation can be challenging for young, single members who therefore rely heavily on the Airman’s or Officers messes for their meals. It was with this in mind, Taste of Tindal was also founded.

ACW Asha Appleby said the inability to experiment and produce exciting food at home was a down-side to living-in-accommodation.

“We are limited to a microwave as a means of a creative outlet when it comes to our cooking,” ACW Appleby said.

“The Taste of Tindal classes not only have a great social atmosphere in which to meet like-minded people but they also allow hopeless cooks like myself to learn new things and have a little fun with food where we otherwise wouldn’t be able to.”

Each class, held on Wednesday evenings at the RAAF Base Tindal Community rooms, is limited to 10 students and starts from $15, which covers ingredients, consumable items and buying new cooking equipment.

For more information, contact CPL Cynthia Gilchrist at tastyofftindal@gmail.com

Looking good, Tindal cooks

Senior ADF Officer at RAAF Base Tindal WOFF Mark Larner with the buffet桌上.

3000 ADF members learn more about WRA progress

ABOUT 3000 ADF members attended the Workplace Remuneration Arrangement (WRA) information presentations conducted in June.

The presentations provided an overview of the ADF remuneration process, the nature of the Defence Employment Offer and allowed ADF members to comment on the development of the productivity principals.

During the presentations a number of common productivity and efficiency initiatives were identified by ADF members and included:

- Review and simplification of allowance entitlements:
  - Utilisation of Living-In-Accommodation (LIA) in preference to Rental Assistance (RA)
  - where appropriate.
- Travel administration:
  - Simplification of processing and travel acquittal administration.
- Director Military Remuneration COL Brendan Stevens is committed to ensuring accurate, up-to-date information is available for all ADF members.

“The completion of the information sessions, our team is now committed to developing a comprehensive and robust submission including common themes provided by ADF members,” COL Stevens said.

“Defence remains committed to delivering a competitive employment offer for ADF members so that we continue to attract and retain the right people. The WRA represents one key component of that offer.”

The WRA team is now compiling the common productivity and efficiency initiatives identified by ADF members.

Productivity savings will form the basis for pay increase options proposed for the next WRA.

Once the WRA proposal is endorsed, CDF will release a signal to all ADF members advising the details.

Information and updates on the WRA and WRA proposal are available on the ADF Pay and Conditions website at www.daf.gov.au/pay and the People Connect intranet site. Or you can access this information by scanning the QR code below with a smartphone.
Do you have what it takes?

Trainees’ community spirit

Sgt Dave Morley

NCOs looking to advance their careers, and spend more time with their families in a great location, should consider a posting as a Course Military Adviser (CMA) at the RAAF School of Technical Training (RAAFSTT) Wagga Wagga.

Sgt Richard Mann said his family loved Wagga and had made a lot of friends in the town.

“I wanted to get off the flight-line after 15 years and help with passing on my knowledge to younger members,” he said.

“I’m using a totally different skillset and the challenges have been excellent!”

Sgt Mann said one of his roles was trainee progress manager.

“I assist with remediating trainees that may need further assistance with their studies,” he said.

“We monitor their progress to ensure they’re suitable for aviation. It’s an important job where we can assist with their study techniques and offer one-on-one tuition for those who may be struggling at times.”

Cpl Rob Mitchell, who has been in the Air Force for 10 years and was previously an aircraft technician at No. 3 Squadron, said he enjoyed the variety of a CMA’s duties.

“At a squadron you’re just doing the same thing all the time, even though it might be with different aircraft, but here it’s different all the time,” he said.

“You get to learn different skillsets and get to manage a course of trainees.

“This will set you up to succeed as a sergeant with the management, instructing and admin skills you learn.”

Cpl Mitchell said another benefit of being a CMA was access to courses.

“Here you can do other courses that you might not get at a squadron and get extra qualifications,” he said.

Cpl Tony Whitmore, who came to RAAFSTT from No. 10 Squadron where he was an aircraft technician on Orions, said he enjoyed seeing the trainees mature in an aviation environment.

“At the end of the day it makes you feel good when you see what they were when they arrived and what they’ve become when they leave,” he said.

“I’d work with them any day of the week now.

“You have the opportunity to make them the kind of tech you are, you can really make a difference.”

Cpl Whitmore said as a CMA he had the opportunity to manage a lot more troops than he would at a squadron.

“You get to act in a rank higher than you’re, you can really make a difference.”

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In honour of their sacrifice

Wall display will honour military dogs, reports LEUT Peter Croce.

As time passes it is important we remember our military working dogs and explosive detection dogs that have died protecting us and recognise their service.

– MAJGEN Craig Orme

MAJGEN Orme said military dogs had been vital in protecting Australian and coalition personnel by detecting improvised explosive devices and providing security to personnel.

He has now approved a wall display to be provided to Australia’s Middle Eastern bases to honour their contribution.

“As time passes it is important we remember our military working dogs and explosive detection dogs that have died protecting us and recognise their service,” he said.

“The dogs make a real difference to the lives of their handlers and those that receive their protection.”

CPL Blanchette said she wrote the email after returning from the Middle East.

She was moved by the image of SPR Darren Smith and his dog Herbie who were killed along with SPR Jacob Moerland when an improvised explosive device detonated on June 7, 2010, in the Mirabad Valley.

“Being an animal/dog person myself I think I can understand the relationship a dog handler has with their dog,” CPL Blanchette said.

As time passes it is important we remember our military working dogs and explosive detection dogs that have died protecting us and recognise their service.
Graduate FLGOFF Tom Robson shares his experience in the first cohort of the new Initial Officers’ Course.

IT’S the first day of the Initial Officers’ Course and we’re shaking all the way down to our distinctly non-military civilian dress shoes.

From out of the headquarters building smart-looking figure in camouflage clothing emerges and marches towards us.

We spot the tell-tale stripes which test this is our military skills instructor.

He stops in front of us, takes a deep breath and in a loud, deep voice asks, “So who’s seen Full Metal Jacket?”

A few hands go up.

“Yeah, we don’t do things that way anymore.”

Officers’ Training School (OTS) has never really done things the way we see in movies, but there is no doubt that it is now at the forefront of the Air Force’s push for cultural change. And for my classmates and I, the effects of this change have been huge.

The first few weeks are still spent learning military skills, but the emphasis is now on developing the self-mastery and teamwork that are defining characteristics of Air Force junior officers.

You shake with fear when a sergeant is rifling around in your room, which you have cleaned more thoroughly than you have ever cleaned anything in your life.

Especially when he points to a tiny spider which has somehow managed to get up into the ventilation ducts of the block.

“Navy don’t like people walking on the grass. they pretend it’s water,” our instructor says.

“Are you feeling OK?”

“Yeah, we don’t do things that way anymore.”

“Navy don’t like people walking on the grass. they pretend it’s water,” our instructor says.

But exercises like this give us an idea of what exactly they contribute to Air Force and the wider ADF.

Not only that, but we got to talk to members of the RAAF who are in category.

The importance of experiences like that cannot be overstated, and the fact that OTS is now making those opportunities more widespread is a real step in the right direction.

Ready to graduate

Fast-forward three months and it’s graduation day.

All the slow marching in the world can’t change the sense of pride you feel as you pass the stands and see your loved ones cheering for you and as you pass in front of the dias you see the Deputy Chief of Air Force mouth the words “well done”.

Each of the Force Element Groups we visited sent their top people to give us an idea of what exactly they contribute to Air Force and the wider ADF.

Not only that, but we got to talk to members of the RAAF who are in category.

The importance of experiences like that cannot be overstated, and the fact that OTS is now making those opportunities more widespread is a real step in the right direction.

We are encouraged to reflect on our experiences and to try to understand ourselves, judge ourselves according to the standards set out in the Force values and address those areas where we fall short of the mark.

The course has emphasised that our suitability for employment isn’t determined just by how easily we passed our weapons-handling test or how skilled we are within our specialisation.

What’s assessed is not just what we do, but how much integrity we display as we do it, and this is a huge shift from the hard-skill focus of previous courses.

Not only that, but the enormous cultural and educational change which has taken place at OTS gives us a much better understanding of, and pride in, our role in the defence of Australia.

Getting hands-on

More than one instructor has called the old way of doing things death by PowerPoint, and that’s exactly what this new program tries to avoid.

Now, students get an overview of the structure and processes of Air Force, Joint Operations Command and the other services in the classroom, then we go out to see, touch and do the real thing.

Whether it’s participating in a service at the Australian War Memorial, or watching the afterburners glow on an F/A-18 as it takes off on a night-flying exercise at RAAF Base Williamtown, junior officers-in-training are now encouraged to appreciate the history, structure and capabilities of the ADF hands-on.

That’s not to say there aren’t challenges when operating in a joint environment.

Take as an example the warning given to us while we were out training on a Navy base.

“Navy don’t like people walking on the grass. they pretend it’s water,” our instructor said.

If you do it near the headquarters building, don’t be surprised if the Warrant Officer Discipline throws a lifeguard at you and screams “man overboard!”

Needless to say, a fair few of us drowned.

But exercises like this give us an appreciation of the unique service cultures of the different military branches, which is important because we don’t always deploy as single-service forces.

Officers and airmen need to have an appreciation of the capabilities, strategic mindset and structure of the other services if we are to successfully employ air power in a war-like environment.

There have been big changes at OTS, yet however much the program changes, that, at least, will always be the same.

Later that evening, the celebrations kick off and it’s a bit of a bittersweet moment.

Yes, we’ve graduated, but this night also marks the end of our time together.

From here we go to our units or on to further training.

For now, however, all that matters is the banter that flows from table to table, as we’re reminded of the one hundred and one ways we stuffed up.

Ourselves.

One poor student has had to sit through a half-dozen recounts of the time he tried to move through the degrees of weapon readiness without the barrel attached to his Steyr.

Everywhere we look, we see graduates, staff, VIPs and family gathered together in small groups talking. This, I can’t help thinking, is what we’ve been working towards.

Our loved ones represent where we’ve come from, the wider Air Force is where we’re going, and what we’ve been doing at OTS for the past 17 weeks is working our way through the transitional stage between the two.

The fact that OTS has provided that transitional stage for us doesn’t mean we’re not nervous about the future.

A lot of the people on course are off to DEOTS, SAW, SATC, or are taking up a position in a unit without further training and need to hit the ground running.

In the end though, despite not being totally sure where we fit yet, every one of us is excited to be joining the family business.

More than military skills
IT WAS a trip down memory lane for FLTLT Neville ‘Smokey’ Dawson when he was presented with the South Australian interservice squash tournament trophy at RAAF Base Edinburgh gym.

He teamed up with FSgt Peter Gilkes to win the trophy after a five-game round-robin against Air Force and Navy members on June 27.

The tournament was only revived this year after a 23-year hiatus. FSgt Gilkes, who was also one of the organisers, said at first he drew a blank when he asked around to find out if there was still a trophy in existence after all that time.

“I was all ready to go out and buy one,” he said.

But FLTLT Dawson stopped him. He knew there was a trophy because he was part of the Air Force team that won it the last time the competition was played in 1991. He was 29 then.

“I simply remember the trophy existed – but I wasn’t sure where it was located.”

That led to a further search which led to the discovery of the commemorative plate, complete with its 1991 inscription, from the gymnasium display cabinet where it had a share of the glory with other trophies from all sorts of sport. So they dusted it off.

FLTLT Dawson, who also won the individual crown after beating allcomers said he was glad to get his hands on it again after all that time.

The national Defence squash championships will be played at RAAF Base Williamtown from August 24-29. The tournament will place all players in graded divisions. Aside from the games, there will be coaching sessions, guidance on refereeing and marking, the opportunity to see Defence’s best players and social events.

For more information, contact Woff Brett Parker, brett.parker@defence.gov.au (02) 6265 0053

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RAAF Base Amberley squadrons dominate during rugby league game against No. 9 Force Support Battalion.
SKY-HIGH ACHIEVERS

PERSONNEL SOAR ON EXERCISE HIGH SIERRA

Two No. 76 Squadron Hawk 127s loaded with high explosives fly a bombing mission over High Range in Townsville during Exercise High Sierra.

Photo: CPL Melina Young
EXERCISE HIGH SIERRA

More than 300 personnel helped put pilots through their paces during Exercise High Sierra, FLTLT Cath Friend reports.

**TO THE TEST**

**Photos: CPL Melina Young**

Air Force has an brand new fighter pilots following recent High Sierra, conducted at RAAF Base, Townsville. The highly successful exercise saw the identification of the months of hard work for students undertaking the Hornet Operational Conversion (OPCON) course. 76SQn; No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit, prepares for an air combat training mission over the No. 76 Squadron, based out of Darwin, to provide air-to-ground support and personnel from No. 76 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit, prepares for an air combat training mission over Townsville.

Armament technician LAC Leigh Wutzke, of 76SQN, loads a high-explosive bomb on to a Hawk 127.

Armament technician LAC Greg Clapcott, of 76SQN, loads a high-explosive bomb on to a Hawk 127.

Air combat officer FLTLT Kieran Frost, of 114 MCRU, maintains fuse initiators.

Armament fitter AC Mathew Bee, of 76SQN, attaches arming wires on High Sierra.

FLTLT Cath Friend

When providing support to Exercise High Sierra, CO No. 76 Squadron WOCDR Goold said the squadron’s role in Townsville was threefold. Firstly, to support No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit, secondly to support 3 Brigade’s Combined Arms Training Activity (CATA) and finally for our own training,” he said.

“During High Sierra our role was to be the bad guys for the 2OCU students in their final strike mission of their course. The OPCOn students were divided into three groups. The first group used the Super Hornet to drop bombs at their assigned target and that their mission was to ensure that all the training was prepared with additional supporting units deployed to help 2OCU achieve its goals.

This support included nine Williamtown-based Hawk 127 Lead-In Fighters from No. 76 Squadron to provide combat adversary support, six RAAF Classic and Super Hornets from No. 76 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit, who deployed in mass from Darwin to provide targeting information to the PIAs.

It took more than 300 personnel to support the graduating students.

“Additionally, exposing the students to deployed operations allows them a taste of what life is like at an operational unit. This is important as the students’ transition from the training environment to the deployed element,” he said.

This year, the exercise was believed with additional supporting units deployed to help 2OCU achieve its goals.

Support and training role for squadron

The squadron’s internal training also concentrated on developing junior aircrew.

“Many of these pilots and air combat officers will now start their own operational conversion on to Classic and Super Hornets and it is a very challenging role,” WOCDR Goold said.

“While deployed to High Sierra, 76SQn also played host to three local high schools, showing them the many roles that are available to them should they join the Air Force.”

The visiting students were an eye opener. These visits allowed us to show the local high school students who are interested in aviation around the RAAF aircraft.” WOCDR Goold said.

“We were reminded that young people are encouraged to apply to the Air Force, knowing that their training would be to see more missions fly and maintain those aircraft.”

**Support and training role for squadron**

FLTLT Cath Friend

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“The carriage and employment of high-explosive weapons really focuses the students to a number of the key roles of the Hornet. The range’s proximity to Townsville, was the culmination of five months of hard work for students undertakings the Hornet Operational Conversion (OPCON) course. 76SQn; No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit, prepares for an air combat training mission over Townsville. The facilities that we used were exactly what we needed to conduct high-explosive operations into the nearby high Range Training Area,” he said.

“Additionally, exposing the students to deployed operations allows them a taste of what life is like at an operational unit. This is important as the students’ transition from the training environment to the deployed element,” he said.

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FLTLT Cath Friend

ANOTHER success of Exercise High Sierra was the involvement of No. 114 Mobile Control and Reporting Unit (MCRU).

The aim of the 114 MCRU deployment was to provide airspace battle management for No. 2 Operational Conversion Unit and to deploy and validate their capabilities for CAF’s Directed Level of Capability for the Mobile Control and Reporting Centre (MCRC).

This included deploying the Tactical Air Defence Radar System (TADRS) by road to McCrossan training area 90km west of Townsville and the MCRC by air to RAAF Base Townsville.

This ensured 114 MCRU could deploy its entire capability with Air Force support from the unit’s home location of RAAF Base Darwin.

The deployment of the MCRC required a two-day airlift with C-17A Globemaster support, which included relocating the deployable operations and technical cabins and 50 personnel.

This was the first time the MCRC had been transported by a RAAF C-17A.

The TADRS travelled to High Range on a four-day road convoy of 15 vehicles.

XO 114 MCRU SQNLDR Stuart McLean said the logistics and maintenance piece for the deployment was large.

“The last time the MCRC was deployed was part of operational test and evaluation during Exercise Aces North in 2011, however, the last time we used the MCRC in its full capability was in Afghanistan for two years between 2007 and 2009,” he said.

“The set-up of the MCRC and TADRS was a bit of a challenge as we have not done that for a while, including the establishment of the communication networks that we needed to make the system work and effectively operate in the tight time frame.

“The unit has put in a considerable amount of time into the planning effort, and we did considerably well but it’s been a lot of work for a lot of people. I’m very proud of the unit’s effort.”

By land and air

Communication electronic technician LAC Travis Cramb, of 114 MCRU, drives in the support footings for the radar.

Air load teams from RAAF Base Darwin begin to load the Mobile Control Reporting Cabin and equipment onto a C-17A Globemaster for transport to RAAF Base Townsville.

Air Combat Officer FLGOFF Sam De Boer, of 114 MCRU, watches the raising of the radar.

Photos: CPL David Gibbs